Contents: Bi Identity, Puzzle, Long Term Relationships?, Poetry

NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1995 VOLUME 8, NUMBER 5

Why I Am Bisexual

(opinions most assuredly *not* those of the author)

by Lydia Swartz

This list represents things I have been told about myself, things I have said about myself, things other bisexual (although not always self-identified bisexual) women have told me about themselves, things bisexual friends have been told, things I have read as true about myself as a bisexual woman, things lovers and play partners have informed me of with great seriousness, things I have heard from het and lesbian and gay folks who didn't know I was bi (or explained to me that I wasn't *really* bi, no matter what I might say), messages I received from my family. I'll bet you have heard lots of them. I'll bet you have said at least a few of them (I have) — 'fess up!

1— I can't make up my mind.
2— I am greedy and want to fuck everything.
3— I have not matured sexually.
4— I am afraid of coming out of the closet.
5— I don't take women or my relationships with women seriously.
6— Men have money and I want it so badly that I will fuck them to get it, even though they're icky.
7— I am emotionally shallow.
8— I haven't met the right man.
9— I haven't met the right woman.
10— I am jaded.
11— I am naive.
12— I am oversexed.
13— I am frigid.
14— I hate men.
15— I hate women.
16— I am too fat.
17— I am too ugly.
18— I am too pretty, white, and rich and I never had to work for anything.
19— I have no idea what it was like for lesbians twenty years ago.
20— I have no idea what it's like to make a real commitment to a real man.
21— My mother took the wrong drugs while pregnant with me.
22— I am not really bisexual, I just think I am.
23— I am a Gemini.
24— I wish I had a dick.
25— I wish I had a dick. Yours, in fact. Where's my knife?
26— My father was too nice.
27— My father raped me and I don't remember it.
28— My mother wasn't nice enough.
29— My mother raped me and I don't remember it.
30— My mother and father made me watch and I don't remember it.
31— My mother and father wouldn't let me watch and I'm still pissed off about it.
32— I wanted my mother and father to watch and they wouldn't.
33— I am a masochist and I'll play with anybody as long as they hurt me.
34— I am a sadist and I'll fuck anybody who lets me hurt them a lot first.

'Reasons' continued on page 14

Join! $10-50/year, sliding scale.
I want to wear my bisexuality in my wallet. Make me a card carrying bisexual! Enclosed is $________ for a one-year membership.

Subscribe! $10/year, flexible.
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Total enclosed: ____________

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All contributions are tax-deductible
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Send to: SBWN, PO Box 30645, Greenwood Station, Seattle, WA 98103-0645

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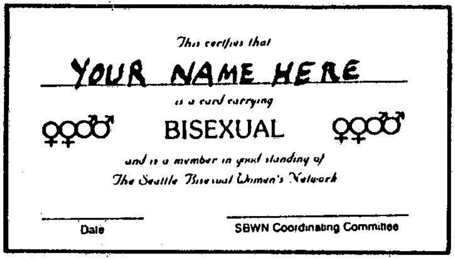

This certifies that

YOUR NAME HERE

is a card carrying

♀♀♂♂ BISEXUAL ♀♀♂♂

and is a member in good standing of
The Seattle Bisexual Women's Network

________ Date

________ SBWN Coordinating Committee

Memberships are $10-50 a year on a sliding scale, and are open to women everywhere. Members are entitled to discounts on events and purchases. See mail-in form above.

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network and to promote, in both the heterosexual world and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community that is united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face on the bases of our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is non-hierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We are invested in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

North Bi Northwest ***is the bimonthly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. It is produced by women and is feminist in content. We feature news and events pertinent to the bisexual community, as well as creative writing, artwork, and an advice column.***

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We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone.

We accept input on disk **with** ***hard copy (Mac or PC), typed, or handwritten if it's legible. If you send us something to print, you get a free issue; send six and get a year's subscription! Let us know what pseudonym you use, if you do not want to publish under your everyday name.***

Views expressed in **North Bi Northwest** ***are those of individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of SBWN. Inclusion in this publication does not indicate author's sexual orientation.***

Deadline for submissions to the next issue: Wed, Nov 1. (see address above).

North Bi Northwest is printed on bi paper! (50% recycled).

North Bi Northwest

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Peggy Walsh,
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& other Volunteers

Distribution:
Bettykay, Denise Ottoson
and volunteers

Seattle Bisexual
Women's Network
PO Box 30645
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SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

North Bi Northwest is available by subscription (see above) or at area bookstores and newsstands, including: in Seattle, **Red and Black Books, Beyond the Closet, Bailey Coy Books, Fremont Place Book Company,** and **Toys in Babeland.**

North Bi Northwest is a publication of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services, PO Box 22228, Seattle, WA 98122-0228. (Not for correspondence with SBWN or *North Bi Northwest*).

From the

Editor...

This is a big year for change! SBWN has once again reorganized; the short-term goals have been achieved, the changes implemented seem to be working (e.g. consistent 6:30pm meeting start times).

I (Peggy) have fallen in love, and am moving to Portland, Oregon to live the dream with my new family, Anne and Malcolm. Lizabeth has just married and is focusing on her family.

We're passing North Bi Northwest on to a new team by the end of the year. There is a variety of tasks, many non-technical: news gathering of various sorts, advertising, maintaining subscriber list, layout, pasteup, copy editing, coordinating the volunteers for the project.... Please call SBWN or Peggy if you'd like to be on the new team. We'll be getting together soon to begin working out who wants to do what.

I've really enjoyed publishing North Bi Northwest. The most anxious part has been when the deadline has passed and there's only three pages of input, and when promised stuff doesn't show up and people stop answering their phones or returning calls. On the other hand, putting it together is fun. I feel privileged to have women trust me with the personal stuff I've received, some of it printed under pseudonyms. I've learned a lot from this work.

I expect the newsletter will have a different flavor with its new production team, but that it will continue to be interesting and offer a variety of viewpoints. I thank you all for your support, your input, and your readership. Please give the new administration its deserved support.

BISEXUAL RESOURCE GUIDE now available! Contains listings of more than 1400 bi and les-bi-gay groups in over 20 countries, a bibliography of bi books, a guide to recommended films, and more! Published by Bisexual Resource Center. To order send $8check and your order to: BRC, PO Box 639, Cambridge MA 02140 USA

Hey you gorgeous bi women!

Hope I'm in time 2 renew my subscription. I have some $ right now & would love to share it with my bisexual sisters.

Keep up the great work on the newsletter, social & support stuff too.

I've been doing a lot of anti-racism work with the LRC lately & the climate is pretty supportive right now, so if you ever decide to look for Capitol Hill meeting space that's free (or donation-based), you might wanna give them a call.

✍ Ellie Weiss

BI BODY PARTS

4 FABULOUS WOMEN!
4 WONDERFUL PARTS!
4 STUNNING MAGNETS!

$3 EACH $10 FOR ANY 4

We want to add some Bi Boy Body Parts to the collection. Interested? Call 206-783-7987 for more info.

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Attention!

Would you like to help plan a bridge-building forum between lesbian and bisexual-identified women? Have you organizing experience to share? Or just a strong desire to see this project through? If you would like to be in on the planning process for this important event, or just to hear more, please contact Siri or Sara H. at SBWN (783-7987), or Valerie R. at the Lesbian Resource Center (322-3965). We are especially in need of lesbian-identified women and women not in SBWN. Tell your friends! It's time for lesbian and bi women to get to know each other better, and build strong alliances in the days ahead.

HISTORIANS, WRITERS:

If you are or know any historical researchers/ writers, editors, art and ad/business manager folk who would like to help produce a high-quality historical journal about lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people, call Denise at 206-323-2890 or e-mail bb042@scn.org.

SMALL GROUPS FORMING

Birthmothers support group forming. We plan to meet on alternate weeks for approximately three months to discuss issues in common. If you've relinquished a child for adoption and would like to join us, call Ariel at 783-7987.

Bi women with kids: want to hang out together while the kids entertain each other? To get in on this group, leave a message for Margaret S. on SBWN's phone machine, 783-7987.

SPEAK OUT AND HAVE FUN!

BiOut Speakers Bureau needs a few more bi women and men on its roster. Groups often ask for particular speaker demographics: male, female, coupled, single, monogamous or not, parents. We'd like a larger pool to call from. You needn't be out to the general public; you get to choose what sort of venue you will speak in. It's usually pretty informal.

We have a few regular engagements (i.e. PFLAG, Seattle Counseling Service volunteer training, Community College classes), and get occasional other calls. Our most recent talk was at PFLAG. At the end, audience members congratulated us on our courage at speaking out; we told them that PFLAG is an easy audience, eager to learn, friendly and fun.

SBWN's Social Committee is coordinating parties and activities where we can get to know each other better in a casual setting. If you have suggestions to offer, leave the committee a message on SBWN's phone line; we need ideas and sponsors. Coming up are: Oct. 14, GCSS Cabaret, 8pm at Russian Hall; Oct. 28, Hallowe'en costume party at Regina's; Nov. 4, SBWN's 10th Birthday Party at Sappho's, the new queer bar in Kent; Nov. 26, Bi Harvest Potluck, 2pm at Lizabeth and Paul's; Kellie's birthday party in January (see what all that Capricorn stuff is about); and a cross-country ski outing in February.

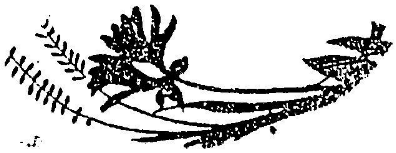
SBWN's Tenth Birthday Party is on Saturday, November 4th at Sappho's, the new queer bar at 226 1st Ave S, in Kent. Meet for dinner between 5:30 and 6pm, then dance your heart out! To find the place from Seattle, take the Willis exit from I-5, turn left, go under freeway, cross railroad, turn left on First Ave. There's a parking lot on the left; Sappho's is mid-block on the right.

Festivities and Funtime

The Second Annual Heart of the West women's dance and music extravaganza will be held November 2-5 at the Hacienda Hotel in Las Vegas. Organizers promise 'a fabulous weekend of unique, exciting activities, lots of womyn, big name entertainment, crafts, catered events, workshops, and dances nightly.' Scheduled to appear are such entertainers as Kate Clinton, Suede, Alix Dobkin, and Lucie Blue Tremblay. The cost of a four-day pass is $259. For more information call 1-800-GET-PLUS.

Gay Community Social Services (GCSS) is presenting a **Mid Autumn's Night Cabaret** on October 14th at the Russian Hall, 704 19th Ave E. The event, which begins at 8pm, promises to be an evening of music, entertainment, dance and comedy. Performers include: Foxowitz, Pendra, Cookie LaRue, Michael Redearth, and Siri Schroder. For reservations, call 206-292-5144.

GCSS is an umbrella organization that provides non-profit tax-exempt status to small projects in the bisexual, lesbian and gay community. Projects include such various resources as the Lesbian Assistance Project, League for Lesbian and Gay Prisoners, and the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network.



GAY COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES

presents

a Mid-Autumn's Night

CABARET

OCTOBER 14, 1995

8:00 PM

Fundraisers and Volunteer Opportunities

Everything under the sun, and then some! You'll find it all at **Seattle Rape Relief's Sixth Annual Fall Auction**, 6pm on Saturday November 11 at the Museum of History & Industry. This is Seattle Rape Relief's biggest fundraising event of the year, so mark your calendars. For more information contact the center at 1905 S. Jackson St, Seattle WA.

Seattle Counseling Service for Sexual Minorities is currently holding **Connections Hotline volunteer training** on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Phoneworkers will be asked to commit one three-hour shift per week on any weekday. The Connections Hotline provides crisis intervention, support, information and referrals to people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or concerned others. Seattle Counseling Service for Sexual Minorities is located at 1820 E Pine St, Seattle. For more information call 206-323-0220 or 1-800-5B-PROUD.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is looking for volunteers to help the organization in a variety of areas including fundraising, community events, youth advocacy, networking/diversity, speaker's bureau, and the PFLAG helpline. If you have energy, ideas and constructive suggestions, call the Seattle-Tacoma Metropolitan Chapter at 206-325-7724, or send e-mail to PFLAGSEA@aol.com.

Young lesbians on the street have enough to worry about. For them, things like finding a tampon, soap, shampoo or vitamin C, the things that many of us view as basic necessities, are almost impossible. The **Social Justice Committee of the Lesbian Resource Center is assembling personal hygiene kits** for young women which they will distribute weekly. They are beginning to collect items for these kits. If you can donate boxes of tampons or pads, small hotel-sized bars of soap, small bottles of shampoo, toothbrushes and paste, combs and zip-lock bags, please contact the LRC, 1808 Bellevue Ave #204, Seattle WA. If you are interested in volunteering to distribute, call Mindy at 322-3965.

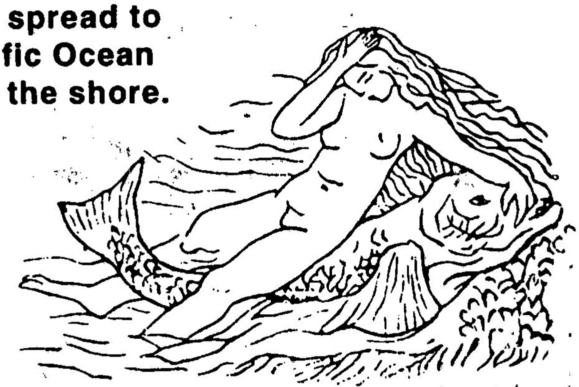
Coalition of Community Organizations (COCO) is a newly forming coalition of organizations serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Their purpose is to build better communication and coordination among groups, develop joint projects, leadership training.... Meetings are on fourth Thursdays in the Multipurpose Room at Seattle Counseling Services; 1820 E. Pine St, on Seattle's Capitol Hill. (Oct 26, Nov 30).

Harlot on the Shore

by Charmin Wray

That dyke upstairs.
She saw me watching
Her big crusty eyeballs
Ogle over your sweet self.

You've about worn out
Waiting for me to put out
And I am spread to
The Pacific Ocean
Harlot on the shore.

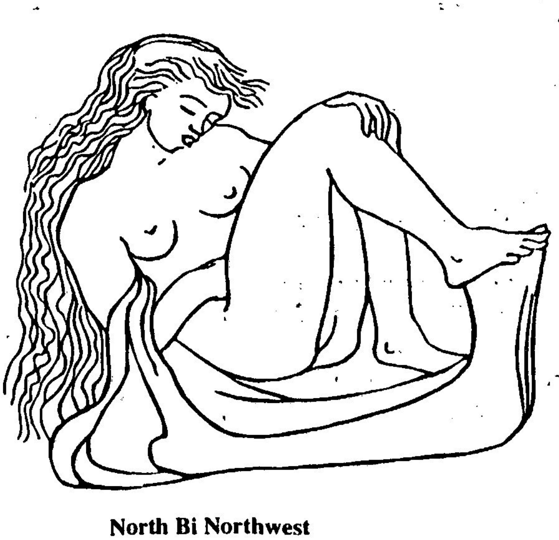


Darling, I am positively
Sotted. I am at the
Beach house, the ocean is
Receiving me she is
Wet and sexy.

The blood and the bone
Met again where my
Nails were caked with
Menstruation and masturbation.

Drunk and open in the sand,
I called your name
When the snake slithered
The sharp coastal grass
And the tiny black
spider
Took a bite where
my hip
Curves into my
thigh.

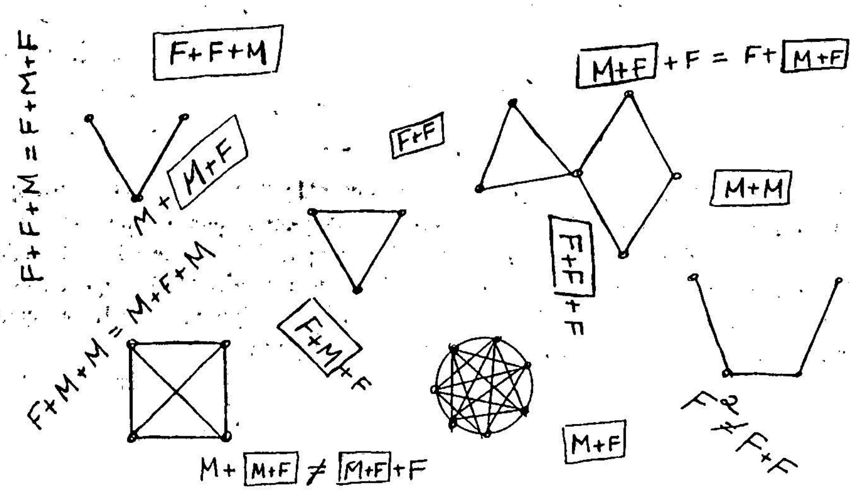
Here is a toast to
trying
To drink your
name
Away, but the
ocean is salty.



Intimacy with Strangers

by Kellie

The restaurant was loud and full of interesting people. We chatted about comfort zones, drew diagrams of possible relationships, debated the balance of the equations, and longed to see the rest of the waitress' tattoo. There was intimacy in those moments; a willingness to be open, honest and vulnerable. I was sad to have the evening end.



Kellie

Workshops, Events and Resources

'Celebrating the Body Erotic for Women,' a weekend workshop designed to help women explore the link between sexuality and spirituality, will be held October 13-15 in Seattle. Sponsored by the Body Electric School of Oakland, CA, the experimental workshop combines ritual, conscious breathing, movement and touch to guide participants into awareness of erotic states and their healing potential. Separate workshops will also be held for men only, and for both men and women in October and November. Tuition for each workshop is $275. For information and registration, contact Dennis at 206-329-9804 or Kate at 206-233-1848.

The 8th Annual Women's Health Conference will be held from 8am to 4pm on October 7th at Overlake Hospital Medical Center, Education Conference Center. The cost of the conference, which is sponsored by the University of Washington Women's Center, is $45. To register, contact Overlake Hospital at 206-688-5259.

REFLECTION

by Norma Lois Oland

THE STREETS ARE MIRRORED BLACK WHEN IT RAINS.
CARS SLIP BY LEAVING CONTINUOUS PATTERNS ON THE PLATE GLASS STREET.
ALL THE WORLD IS GRAY EXCEPT THE TRAFFIC LIGHT
THAT CHANGES RED TO GREEN, AND WINKS KNOWINGLY WITH A YELLOW EYE.

New Media Offered

The inaugural issue of a locally produced lesbian and gay magazine, ***2002: A Guide for the Next Generation,*** rolled of the presses in July. *2002* offers news and commentary with an emphasis on the Pacific Northwest and 'an editorial focus that pays tribute to the past, informs about the present, and builds toward a common future.' Direct your inquiries to the publisher at Beyond 2002, 1202 E Pike St, Ste 592, Seattle WA 98122-3934. The phone number is 206-292-1440.

If you're up late on some Wednesday night, check out **Network Q on KBTC channel 23** at 11pm or KCKA channel 15. It's the first weekly gay television show with national distribution. So far they've done a comprehensive piece on Camp SisterSpirit in Ovett, Mississippi, shown us the fun at the Mardi Gras of Sydney, Australia Pride March (they do it at night — all night), and taken us to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Pride Week.

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WHAT Did You Call Me?!

by Sheri

Labels are a two-edged sword. They Empower and Enslave. Defend and Destroy. Free and Fetter. They can give our lives definition, allow us to seek out others of like mind, and teach others to respect our diversity. At the same time they can limit us, box us in, and shut us out. "We're here! We're Queer!" "GF seeks… no butches, no bi's."

When I came to a bisexual identity two years ago, I was overwhelmed with a sense of freedom. I finally 'knew' who/what I was. (Though anyone who has done much self-examination knows that lasts only so long.) Moreover, I was able to meet other people who thought and felt the same way. Suddenly, I had a new 'family' who said that it was okay to love women, too. But, having a new word isn't the end — it is only a beginning.

Unfortunately, there are negative connotations that go with any label/identity. I have two primary hangups with the word 'bi-sexual.' The first is 'bi.' There is the whole feel there of 'A or B' — as if everyone fell neatly into the male/female category. To my 'bisexual' friend (at least she came to the 'bisexual' group) who feels more like a 'bisexual man in a woman's body waiting for the perfect androgynous being to come along,' the 'bi' part is rather narrow. (Two other prefixes I personally prefer are pan- or poly- sexual. However, they don't make for cute slogans like 'BI American' and require more explanation.) Then there is the rest of the word, which many people tend to read as biSEXual, or even 'BI ' will have SEX with yoU or anyone at ALl.' That is why I like the word 'Queer' — different, unusual — it fits my style. That is one advantage to 'gay' and 'lesbian;' you can discuss identity without necessarily mentioning 'sex.' The list of labels can go on. I know lesBIan women, lesbian-identified bisexuals, bisexually-identified lesbians and a large number of dykes.

Still, none of these labels really do my life justice all by themselves. I am also a Speech/Language Pathologist, a Sign Language Interpreter, Poly-amourous (loving more than one person at the same time — so you don't have to look it up to finish the article), a Daughter, a Christian, a Teacher, a Small Business Owner, and as of this month a Student again. And all of these things speak very deeply to who I am. They involve years of growing, studying, agonizing and rejoicing. Miss any one 'label' and you are missing a part of me.

So yes, my 'bisexual' identity is very important to me. But… well I believe it is summed up best in a T-shirt I made with the Charlottesville Bisexual Women's Support Network:

				S			P			
	S			E			O		F	
B	I	S	E	X	U	A	L		R	
	G			Y			Y		I	
	N						A		E	
		Q			W	O	M	A	N	
		U					O		D	
	T	E	A	C	H	E	R			
		E					O	U	T	
		R					U			
					S	I	S	T	E	R

No Simple Answers!

Bi? Kinky? Het? Queer? No?

A Survey on the Meaning of 'Bisexual' & Other Labels

by Siri Shroeder

I conducted a telephone (for the most part) survey in which I asked SBWN members, and a few women nonmembers, the following questions: "Do you identify as bi? If yes, what does that mean to you? No? How do you identify (or not)? Finally, is there anything you'd like to tell the world about bisexuality?" Here are our answers:

Yes (I identify as bi.). Basically (bisexuality means) that I've had long term committed relationships with both men and women. Bisexuality is about honesty, not about denying heterosexuality or homosexuality. —Steve S.

I identify as bi. I identify as bi rather than lesbian partly to acknowledge the social milieu I was brought up in, partly to validate my past, and partly to acknowledge my attractions to both men and women. —Jill S.

No. I'm really facing my own identity issues right now 'cause I've been celibate for several years and I was open to relationships with women but nothing came along and now there's a man in my life. I would reject the label heterosexual. That's the only thing I know for sure, that I'm not heterosexual. —Anonymous

Yes, I do identify as bi. That means to me that I believe I'm capable of having meaningful relationships with men and women. My experience of being a bisexual person is that I see the world in shades of gray rather than black or white. There's a lot the world doesn't understand about bisexuality.... —Kellie T.

Yes, I identify as bi. Means to me that I'm attracted to both women and men. Gender and genitals don't dictate love. Bisexuals come in all shapes and sizes just like all other sexual orientations. Everyone wants different things: long term relationships, short term relationships, casual sex, monogamy, etc. —Bonnie

Yes, I identify as bisexual. And I wish it contained the word 'love' in it. Bi means, to me, as someone who is just coming to identify this way (after 25 years of heterosexual self-identity), not having yet had a relationship with a woman — that I commit myself to the value of being open to all kinds of people, all kinds of experiences and feelings, all kinds of beauty. Wherever that leads me year by year and moment by moment... trying not to be terrified as I feel myself change, "Oh here I set off again, and it's going to be a long trek this time before I sit down!" Because this will be my life. —Siri S.

Sort of (identify as bi). Sometimes bi, sometimes queer or alternative. It (queer/alternative) means that I'm not mainstream, not 'normal.' More than being attracted to both men and women, (my identity) means I have more options. I like the idea of polyfidelity. —Bettykay

Bi. I tell people that I'm a bisexual postoperative transgendered woman happily in a committed lesbian relationship. It (bisexuality) means that it doesn't make any difference who's walking down the street, whether it's a man or a woman or neither, that if they're attractive I can go, "Hmmm!" —Denise O.

I identify (as) bi. It means I have the best of both worlds. I'm attracted to everybody, not just one gender. We're just people like everybody else. We're just awesome people. —L.N.

I don't define myself as being bi — the denotation is pretty much accurate but the connotation is that I'm promiscuous, at least according to the Stranger Personals. I'm Roman Catholic, I don't have sex on the first date..... When I'm with a man I'm straight, when I'm with a woman I'm lesbian. You can quote that I'm a weenie. I would like to tell people of the world that bisexual doesn't mean you'll screw everything that comes along. —Karen, non-SBWN member

Depends on who's asking and what the circumstances are. I basically claim not to have a sexual orientation; it's got to do with labeling. I feel like, in a lot of circumstances, if people hear that I have a label, they're going to make erroneous assumptions about what that means. If I have to claim a label, I'll accept 'queer' because queer covers a broader range of who I am. We (bisexuals) are everywhere, we look like you, and we probably live on your block. —Peggy W.

I identify as bisexual. The term is a compromise; it means mostly that I'm not monosexual. Always have been very attracted to male and female people physically and emotionally. Bisexuality isn't half-gay, half-straight. We are not straight. We challenge all kinds of paradigms, including the dominant one. —Chris F.

If I'm forced to choose, I'll choose bisexual. But I'd rather not have a label. I want to just be me, and not have myself put into a box. I don't know whether the issue is sexual or not. I do know I want to be closer to women in a way that the heterosexual culture seems to make difficult. —Laurie M.

Priscilla Proudwoman Stadler 1981

I started off identifying as bi — had been with men and wanted to be with women. (I am) just starting a relationship with a woman and now I don't know. I'm frustrated that there have to be labels. I think that the person that we're with should be more important than the gender. —Anonymous

Yes, I do identify as bi. I take the classic definition of being emotionally and sexually attracted to both genders. I just became aware that this option was available. For years, I had denied half of myself because I was unwilling to wear the label lesbian. —Aileen D.

I usually just share my life with people that I want to share my life with and let them figure it out. —Gayla R.

Yes, technically yes (I do identify as bi), and I think everybody is. It means attraction regardless of gender. Bisexuality doesn't necessarily mean nonmonogamy; *Newsweek* (7/17/95 cover story) was misleading in that sense. —Anonymous

Not completely (identify as bi) yet, haven't really committed to that yet; still finding things out. I'm going to take an anti-label stance. I'm just me. I'm on a path, and it's meandering. Bisexuality: means you are attracted to either sex, may or may not include having sexual relations with different sexes. I knew that I was feeling curious about being with women, knew enough about psychology to know that it wouldn't go away. There's a whole lot more people out there than we know about who would be curious about it if they didn't have the walls up that that's bad or that's wrong. I told a friend (about my experiences) and she said, "I can't tell you how many of my women friends I've had this same conversation with. —Susan

Yes I do identify as bi, mostly (for) lack of a better alternative. (I identify this way so as) not to discriminate on the basis of gender, to be open to the possibilities, and because I don't buy into the concept that it's one way or the other. Probably everything (about bisexuality) is misunderstood, also sexuality in general — there's a lot of ignorance. —Brenda P.

I'm not exactly sure how I identify right now. My primary identity is heterosexual; I think that's how people see me; my bi side comes out in my fantasy world. If I was was asked to choose gay straight or bi I probably wouldn't choose. My personal belief is that everybody is bi to a greater or lesser extent, everybody is attracted to both genders. Some people (are attracted) almost exclusively to one gender, some people almost exclusively to the other; but I think everybody has some amount of attraction, however little, to both genders. It's (bisexuality is) just a label, it doesn't say anything about how people really are. —Anonymous

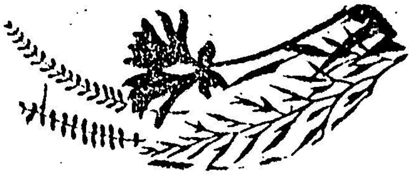
Yes, (I identify as bi), and it means being attracted equally to men and women. Enjoying both masculine and feminine qualities in people. I liked Woody Allen's quote that it doubles your chances for getting laid on Saturday night — I don't know if it's true. —JJ

I'm identifying in that way. It's most compatible with my lifestyle now. I believe that sexual preference and orientation is on a continuum. I chose to be married, I had no idea I was sexually attracted to women. With the self-awareness I have now, I wouldn't choose to get married. But I am, and I have a lot of responsibilities. I'm attracted to many women, and occasionally there's a man I'm attracted to. For myself the most efficacious way of handling all this is to say I'm bisexual. —Kathrin

I think that accepting myself as bisexual is a very freeing thing. When I tried to be straight, I divided the world up into straight men (whom I could be attracted to, gay men (who were good as friends), straight women (friends), and lesbians (scary). By recognizing myself as bisexual, I also consider the possibility that bisexuality is the natural state for human beings. If that's so, then any other person could be a sexual partner, or a friend, or in some other relationship to me. I have to see who's really there rather than making assumptions. And because I'm being honest with myself, I'm more clear about the difference between what is possible and what I'd really do. I can be attracted to many people and, because I've chosen to be in a committed, monogamous relationship, all of these others will remain only possibilities. —Margaret L.

Yes, I do identify as bi. It means that I'm half-gay; I like the men, I like the women. Keep an open mind to the fact that there are bisexual people, as evidenced by what we do. —Lee H.

Yes, I identify as bi. To me, being bi means having the capacity to love any human being. I've identified with many different labels in my life: straight, lesbian, lesbian-bisexual (meaning that I put my relationships with women first), queer, and currently, bisexual. When I'm with my friends, I notice that I use many labels interchangeably. I currently identify as bi because that's the group with whom I feel most comfortable. I still relate to and feel a part of, the lesbian, dyke, and greater queer community. Bisexuality does not mean that my tongue has been everywhere, it means that my tongue has the potential to be anywhere. —Syrenka ▼



The label 'bisexual' ferries me to an island where people support and affirm my relationships, regardless of the gender of my lovers, and where I can offer that support and affirmation to others in return. For this reason I do not eschew labels — the label is a tool (in this case, serving to create community and avoid tedious persons who want to give me attitude about who I'm sleeping with). Confusion results when I forget what I was trying to accomplish with that tool. —Karen Hurley.

Reprinted from NewsLetter of the
Southeastern Region of BiNet USA,
OutCharlotte 95, PO Box 23062,
Charlotte NC 28232-2062.

Let's face it, we all have our problems. Whether it's a perilous polyfidelity predicament or simply how to shop for latex, North Bi Northwest *is here to help. In keeping with the spirit of bisexuality, we offer more than one reply to each question. Send your queeries to our PO Box; our wisdom-mongers are standing bi.*

Dear Answer Amazons,

What advice can you give me on a problem that I've been having? I'm in the beginning of a new relationship with a woman and we are comfortable with the idea of having a non-monogamous relationship. However, what seems to be our problem is that everyone seems to want us to be a 'couple,' and we don't know quite how to avoid that 'coupling' by others.

Girlfriend

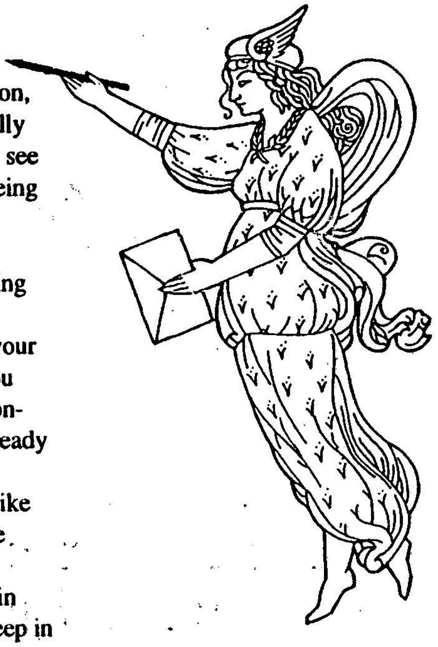
Dear Girlfriend,

Your problem has no final solution, because some people will automatically categorize you as a couple when they see you dating the same woman often. Being 'coupled' must play havoc with your dating life. Other women will not consider dating you for fear of breaking up 'a couple.'

My best advice to you is to tell your friends, and especially the women you are interested in, that your are into non-monogamous relationships, and not ready to be in a committed monogamous relationship. Be open about your dislike of being 'coupled' and eventually the message will get around.

The Queen wishes you the best in resolving the 'coupling' problem. Keep in touch, and pursue the relationships you want.

The Queen of Love



Dear Girlfriend,

So what makes people think you are a couple, or should be? Is it that you always talk about what the two of you are doing? Do you always show up together at parties?

Being 'comfortable with the idea of having a non-monogamous relationship' doesn't mean to me that is what you really want. Is there a possibility here that you really want to be a monogamous couple and are letting others push you into that, so you can say, 'It wasn't *my* idea!' if it fails? Or do you and your friends all hang out in a small tight group where the general understanding is that there is no cross-dating within the group?

If you really want to work this out with people who are experienced, go to a polyfidelity potluck and ask people questions. Above all, be clear in your communications and take responsibility for how people see you.

Love,

Aphrodite

Take the Pledge

Hands Off Washington (HOW) invites you to join in the fight against the newest round of legislative attacks against the bisexual, lesbian, gay and transgender community by taking the Northwest Pledge against discrimination. This non-binding pledge is a strong statement of values that condemns discrimination in all forms, and calls on signers to not sign any initiative that promotes discrimination, specifically, Initiatives 166 and 167, which are currently going around for signatures to qualify for the ballot.

I-166, which is almost identical to 1994's I-608, would void all legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation at all levels of government in Washington State. I-167 would create a preference in all adoptive and foster care placements for married, male-female households, and would severely restrict single-parent settings. It also explicitly bans any adoptive or foster placements with unmarried heterosexual couples or with any gay or lesbian person.

HOW states that, by signing the Pledge, people will send a strong message to the state legislature that discrimination has no place in our state, region or nation. For more information, call HOW at 206-232-5191, or send e-mail to: HOWWCS@aol.com.

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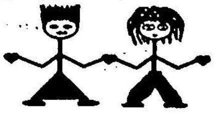

Find these favorite buzz-words in the chart above:

BISEXUAL
BIPHOBIA
BORN
DOMINANCE
DRESS
ENGAGE
FAMILY
FEMALE
GAY
GENDER
IDENTITY
HETEROPHOBIA
HETEROSEXISM
HOMOPHOBIA
MALE
MEDICINE
MONOSEXUAL
ORIENTATION
PATRIARCHY
PERFORMER
RELIGION
SEXISM
SEXUAL
THEORY
TRANSPERSON
TRANSSEXUAL
WOMEN

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Love, Death, and Nature, and the Sea

by Denise Ottoson

When I was growing up and later teaching, every high school student got a chance to read Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Renascence.* It is a good poem, one that usually resonates with adolescents trying to recreate themselves into something called an adult. It would have been a lot more fun, though, had I known that Millay was 'Vincent' to all her friends and that she had been truly anything but the public persona reflected in the textbooks.

She was the first-born daughter of poor but well-educated parents in Rockland, Maine, in 1892. Her odd middle name came from the hospital in which her mother's brother had been saved. After two sisters were born, her parents divorced in 1900, and Cora Millay and her daughters made do in a number of small towns along the middle coast of Maine. According to the glowing published accounts of her youth, Edna was a brilliant, almost pagan girl who was somehow able to be untouched by not fitting into small-town Maine until she was discovered by a YWCA director so impressed by *Renascence* that she found funds to send Edna to Vassar.

Entering Vassar at the age of 21, she soon became both the creative darling and administrative nightmare of the campus. She wrote plays and poems and did well in her classes because of her ability to cram for tests. She disregarded many of the rules of the college and was almost barred from her graduation ceremony even though she had written the music for it. She also fell in love with several of her classmates, particularly Charlotte 'Charlie' Babcock, her senior year roommate. Four years after graduation her play written for the Vassar 50th Year Celebration, *The Lamp and the Bell,* was a thinly-disguised love story at least inspired by their relationship.

Edna and her sister Norma wound up in Greenwich Village, where Edna wrote, acted, and hung out with a radical group of writers, actors and social activists. While her first male lover may have been Nicaraguan writer-teacher Salomon de la Selva, the first who left any known written evidence behind was Floyd Dell, who wanted her to go into psychotherapy for her 'sapphic tendencies.' She said a temporary 'yes' to a proposal for marriage to bisexual editor-writer Witter Bynner. But after a trip to Europe where she spent time in Paris and Vienna, she quickly married Eugen Boissevain, widower of Inez Milholland, a powerful feminist she had heard lecture at Vassar.

At their marriage, Edna was 31 and famous, but she was in chronic ill health and broke. Eugen was 43, a successful businessman who spent the rest of his life caretaking Edna. They eventually settled on an estate called Steepletop and bought a summer island off the coast of Maine. She travelled for readings and conferences, always posing in the long flowing dresses of a five-foot-tall poetess. She became the literary establishment's darling (despite bad war propaganda poetry during World War II; some dedicated to Eugen's Dutch relatives). She also became plagued with depression and dependent on alcohol and morphine. Eugen protected her from inquiring minds and deliberately ignored her love affairs. After his death in 1949, Edna was hospitalized for drunkenness. She died of a heart attack at home a year later.

The 1950s have been recognized as the most repressive decade of the 20th century, and perhaps it is no wonder that Edna's biographers for the next 25 years failed to mention her love of other women, her addictions, even her feminism. Joan Dash and Anne Cheney broke the silence in the mid-70s, but as yet no honest full biography has been published. Certainly her life and work does not fit easily into any particular interest group's agenda, and that may explain why so little attention has been given her. Bisexual women can relate to that.

Readings:

Anne Cheney. *Millay in Greenwich Village.* University of Alabama Press, 1975.
Joan Dash. *A life of One's Own. Three Gifted Women and the Men They Married:* Harper and Row. 1973.
Edna St. Vincent Millay. *Collected Poems.* Harper & Row, 1956.
Edna St. Vincent Millay. *The Lamp and the Bell.* D. Appleton & Co., 1921.
William B. Thesing, ed. *Critical Essays on Edna St. Vincent Millay.* G. K. Hall & Co., 1993.

Sonnet IX

I think I should have loved you presently,
And given in earnest words I flung in jest;
And lifted honest eyes for you to see,
And caught your hand against my cheek and breast;
And all my pretty follies flung aside
That won you to me, and beneath your gaze,
Naked of reticence and shorn of pride,
Spread like a chart my little wicked ways.
I, that had been to you, had you remained,
But one more waking from a recurrent dream,
Cherish no less the certain stakes I gained,
And walk your memory's halls, austere, supreme,
A ghost in marble of a girl you knew
Who would have loved you in a day or two.

Daphne

Why do you follow me? —
Any moment I can be
Nothing but a laurel-tree.

Any moment of the chase
I can leave you in place
A pink bough for your embrace.

Yet if over hill and hollow
Still it is your will to follow,
I am off; — to heel, Apollo!

Ebb

I know what my heart is like
Since your love died:
It is like a hollow ledge
Holding a little pool
Left there by the tide,
A little tepid pool,
Drying inward from the edge.

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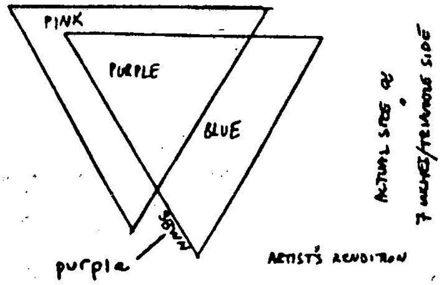

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Full page: $80/issue
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3 consecutive issues: 30% discount

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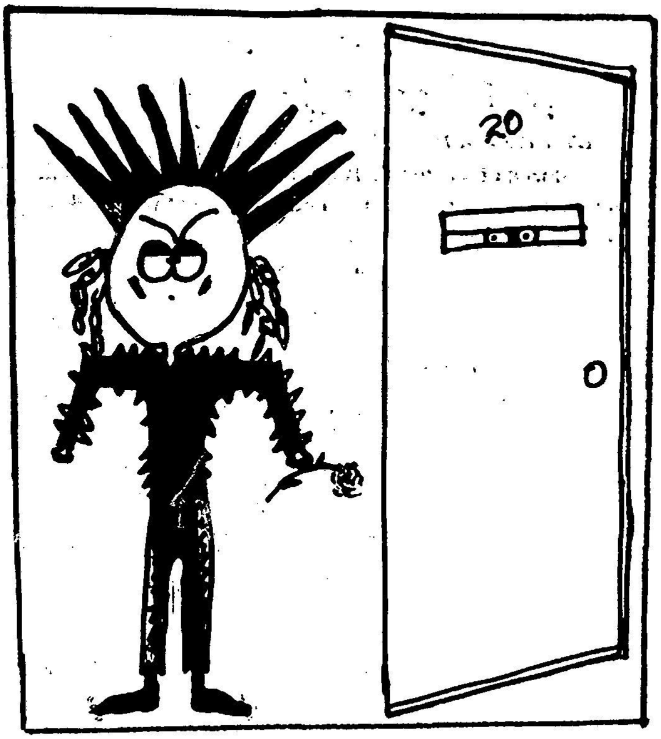
'Reasons' continued from page 1

35— I am a submissive and I'll do anybody as long as it's humiliating.
36— I am a dom and I'll do anybody as long as I can humiliate them.
37— I am a new leather switch and I just don't have the balls it takes to be an old leather top or bottom (but not *both* <shudder>) and queer.
38— I am just saying this to be outrageous.
39— Bisexual is the chic thing to be right now and in five years I'll be whatever the next big thing is.
40— I was a second child.
41— I am a gold-digger.
42— It's a virus from outer space. I caught it when the aliens kidnapped me.
43— I have a short attention span.
44— I buy into the patriarchal notion of women's position in society.
45— I have a high IQ and this makes me a bit strange.
46— If I were a little brighter, I'd realize how foolish all of this is.
47— It's not that I'm omnivorous really, It's just that I'm hungry all the time and I don't much care what I eat.
48— Everybody is bisexual.
49— I am a temple prostitute with a gift for sexual healing.
50— I'm a ho. Three-ways with married couples are incredibly profitable.
51— I need both a man and a woman in bed with me to get off.
52— I am a selfish cunt.
53— I have control issues.
54— I don't have the self-control and pride it takes to be a dyke.
55— I don't have the stability it takes to be a wife and mother.
56— I am codependent and need to develop some self-esteem.
57— It's nothing that an aggressive course of hormone replacement therapy couldn't fix
58— It's nothing that studying the Bible couldn't fix.
59— I hate my body.
60— I am incredibly narcissistic.
61— I hate being touched.
62— I cannot bear intimacy.
63— I am gullible.
64— I don't really like sex, I just think I do.
65— I am a sex addict.
66— I actually lust after young children but I must sublimate.
67— It's a side effect of these antibiotics I take for my skin condition.
68— It's my midlife crisis.
69— I didn't have a date for the senior prom and I never got over it.
70— I drink too much and it loosens my inhibitions.
71— I am not bisexual, I just happen to have a boyfriend and a girlfriend at the moment.
72— I am not bisexual, but my boyfriend and girlfriend are.
73— I am not bisexual, but I have to fuck her to get to him.
74— I am not bisexual, but I have to fuck him to get to her.
75— I only do it with girls at an orgy when my boyfriend is there watching.
76— I only do it with boys at an orgy when my girlfriend is there watching.
77— I only do it with a guy when my mistress orders me to.
78— I only do it with a girl when my master gives me to her.
79— I only do it with a girl if she fucks my boyfriend too.
80— I only do it with a boy if my girlfriend fucks him too.
81— I'll feel differently about it after I have children.
82— I'll feel differently about it after the kids leave home.
83— I have too much time on my hands.



BLIND DATING: SHOULD WE DO IT?

4/19/95 Siri Schroder

84— Aha! She knew I was a lesbian all along.
85— Aha! She knew I was really straight all along.
86— Aha! They knew I couldn't be trusted with their boyfriends/girlfriends.
87— I want female power to steal and take back to my het boyfriend. Your female power, as a matter of fact. Where's my knife?
88— I am just using her until I find a boyfriend.
89— I am just using him until I find a girlfriend.
90— I am experimenting with alternative lifestyles because I want to make the fiction I write more interesting.
91— I am not really bisexual, I am pre-op.
92— Sex with boys is just sex and doesn't count.
93— Sex with girls is just sex and doesn't count.
94— When I get a little older, I'll give it up, buy a camper trailer, and vote Republican.
95— Isn't this a little extreme just because my husband won't go down on me?
96— Isn't this a little extreme just because my girlfriend won't fuck me with a dildo?
97— I damaged my brain with the blotter acid I took in the '60s.
98— It is a phase. I'll get over it.
99— I was blindfolded and I had no idea it was a boy going down on me.
100— I was blindfolded and I had no idea it was a girl going down on me. ▼

Maintaining Long Term Relationships

An SBWN discussion group

by Ariel Rathbun

A dozen of us physically arranged ourselves in a continuum diagonally across the room by our length of current relationship: single, dating; short to longer. The longest was twenty-three years! After chatting with our neighbors, we gathered in small groups of similar range.

Those most close in duration met in small groups and brought back insights to the whole group on what things help or hinder a long-term relationship. Mind you, 'long term' is relative; to some, six months is long, to others perhaps multiple years.

Things that help maintain:

* commitment to honor each other in getting what we want
* keeping issues current — emotional clearing
* finding different ways to resolve problems, look for new perspectives
* flexibility — pencil in 'lines' that define relationship; be willing to erase, modify
* establish a friendship first
* lust can launch, but relationship needs to be strong in other ways
* know yourself and communicate well
* recognize change/growth
* enhanced by experience of LIFE
* have shared relationship goals
* timing — knowing when it's the right time to be involved
* sex means the same thing to each person
* know your bottom line
* know how long to compromise
* avoid boredom

So why be in and work on a long term relationship? We thought it provides:

Regular sex (a relative term)
companionship
friendship
knowledge of oneself by another (intimacy)
dating (by comparison) is 'candy'

We also thought of reasons why not, and did not assume an inherent value in long term relationships, so — why not?

hard work
lack of freedom
independence
self-scheduling
fear of vulnerability
difficult to find someone to change with well.

Things that hinder:

* getting too comfortable in each others' patterns
* fear of loss, of stagnancy
* intensity
* processing to death!
* pickiness, sensitivities
* routine, monotony, stagnancy
* being judgmental, critical
* prejudging (expectations before knowing person)
* shutting down emotionally
* career taking precedence
* transience
* different interest level
* urgency to get close

We took a look over our shoulders at past long term relationships and why they ended (mostly we were the leavers, not the left). Certainly some of us would like to be involved with someone long-term. And certainly some do not feel the need or inspiration to carry on. Undoubtedly there are advantages and disadvantages to any path we're on. Perhaps just noticing our path and progress is the best we can do in any case.

While the focus was primarily on the capital 'R' relationships, i.e. romantic/sexual, we acknowledged varying degrees of overlap, as well as differences, in our friendship relationships, . Now there's a topic that would be fun: Intimacy: Friendship — Friendly Sex — Sexy Friends.... ▼

CALENDAR

For locations, confirmation, or more information, call the appropriate message machine and someone will get back to you (with discretion if requested). For SBWN events call (206) 783-7987. **(Note: this number is liable to change soon.)** For all other Seattle events, **(BiNet, SBMU, Polyfi, BiOut, etc.)** Call (206) 728-4533. *** denotes multi-gender events.**

Sun Oct 8-SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. 'Open Rap'.

Mon Oct 9-SBMU meeting. 7pm. 'Coming Out: Stories and Viewpoints.'

Tue Oct 10-Bluestockings. 7pm @ Laura's, Rainier Valley. *Postcards*, by E. Annie Proulx.

Wed Oct 11-National Coming Out Day! Tell Your Story!!

Sat Oct 14-Gay Community Social Services Benefit Cabaret. 8pm @ Russian Hall, 704 19th Ave E. Reservations: 292-5144. $15.

Sat Oct 14-Polyfidelity Social: GCSS Cabaret, see above.

Mon Oct 16-SBWN Open Rap, 6:30pm.

Sun Oct 22-SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. 'Safer Sex. Hot Dam Girls Show Us Safer Sex!'

Sat Oct 28- Hallowe'en Party, 10pm @ Regina's, Greenwood. Prizes, costumes, games!

Mon Oct 30-SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. 'Why Pick a Man? Why Pick a Woman?'

Wed Nov 1-Input deadline for *North Bi Northwest* December issue. *

Sat Nov 4-SBWN's 10th Birthday Party! @ Sappho's Bar, Kent; meet 5:30pm for dinner, dancing follows.

Sun Nov 5-SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. 'Open Rap'.

Sat Nov 11-Polyfidelity potluck. 6:30pm. Pilgrim Congregational Church. *

Mon Nov 13-SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. 'Social & Organizational Mtg'.

Mon Nov 13-SBMU meeting. 7pm. 'How do we Choose our Friends?'

Tue Nov 14-Bluestockings. 7pm. *Gender Outlaw*, by Kate Bornstein.

Sun Nov 19-SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. 'GCSS Board Visits.'

Sun Nov 26-Bi Harvest Potluck. 2pm @ Lizabeth & Paul's, Wallingford.

Mon Nov 27-SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. 'Open Rap.' NbiNW mailing party.

Sun Dec 3-SBWN Open Rap, 6:30pm.

Sat Dec 9-Polyfidelity Social: Formal & Mythological Masquerade Grand Ball

PEOPLE NEEDN'T BE BISEXUAL TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE ABOVE GROUPS; ONE NEEDS ONLY TO BE NON-BI-HOSTILE, AND OUGHT TO BE AT LEAST A BIT ENTERTAINING AND FRIENDLY.

Local Groups at Your Service

SBWN (Seattle Bisexual Women's Network): Support and discussion groups on alternate Sundays and alternate Mondays at 6:30pm. For more information, call our message machine. Note our occasional live phone answer times.

Bluestockings: SBWN-affiliated monthly feminist women's reading group. In addition to feminist writing, readings have included popular fiction, women's history, and a work-in-progress by a member. All women are welcome.

Take Two Film Club: SBWN-affiliated monthly video club. It's retired for the time being.

SBMU (Seattle Bisexual Men's Union): a men's anti-sexist support and social group with discussion meetings on second Mondays of the month at Pilgrim Congregational Church, room 304 (enter from 10th Av), and monthly social events (location varies).

Polyfidelity Discussion Group: Support group and community for people in or interested in multipartner relationships. Discussions and literature on responsible nonmonogamy, intimate networks, alternative relationships and community. Bimonthly potluck discussions, 6:30pm @ Pilgrim Congregational Church, 509 10th Av E, Seattle; alternate month social events, venue varies.

BiNet, the Bisexual Network of Seattle: multi-gender, multicultural profeminist group; currently on leave until January 10, 1996.

BiOut Speakers Bureau: available for engagements at schools, businesses, counseling centers, churches, etc. to provide information and answers about bisexuality.